

**Congressman Ken Calvert (R-CA)**  
**Opening Statement for the Hubble hearing**  
**February 2, 2005**

Mr. Chairman, thank you for holding today's hearing on the future of the Hubble Space Telescope. There is no doubt that the Hubble is a national treasure and an extraordinary scientific instrument. It has literally opened our eyes to the Universe and dazzled us with images of galaxies, stars, and planets. The Hubble has also fundamentally changed our understanding of the Universe, and forced scientists to re-think many of their theories. Thanks to Hubble, we've caught glimpses of black holes, we've watched comets slam into Jupiter, we've seen stars being born and stars die, and these are but a few examples of Hubble's accomplishments. Not since Galileo first peered into his looking glass nearly 400 years ago has a single telescope made such a difference in the way we see the heavens.

Now, I'm sure we all agree that the Hubble is great, but I suspect there may be differing opinions on what should be done going forward. The Hubble's life is limited, the window of opportunity to service it is narrow, and the costs and risks for a servicing mission are significant. It is valuable to understand and weigh the options which may extend the Hubble space telescope's useful lifespan. It is essential that we fully understand the comparative costs, strengths, and weaknesses of a shuttle servicing mission, a robotic servicing mission, and a mission to fly elements of a Hubble servicing mission placed on a new telescope. In addition, an open and healthy debate about how a Hubble servicing mission, whether by robot or by Shuttle, should be prioritized against funding for other astronomy programs at NASA is welcome.

While the Hubble's amazing journey will some day eventually come to an end, it will not be the end of the story, just as Galileo's looking glass wasn't the last telescope. The next chapter will feature bigger, better, and more capable observatories which will provide even more amazing discoveries.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman for assembling this outstanding panel. I look forward to their testimony, and I look forward to working with my colleagues on the committee in addressing the Hubble Space Telescope and other important issues in the 109<sup>th</sup> Congress.

Now I want to apologize at the outset for not being able to stay for the entirety of today's hearing as I have important and requisite work to attend to as a member of the House Steering Committee. I do look forward to getting briefed on the full debate from today's proceedings at a later time.

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